



Afternoon Alert - Friday, May 19, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that the cabinet approved a bill on Friday to allow Emperor Akihito to relinquish the Chrysanthemum throne to Crown Prince Naruhito in what would be Japan's first abdication in roughly 200 years. NTV, TBS, and TV Asahi led with reports on the anti-conspiracy bill. Fuji TV led with a report on the incident at New York's Times Square in which a car plowed into a crowd, killing one person and injuring 22.

AMBASSADOR NOMINEE

- [U.S. envoy pick stresses “ironclad” commitment to Japan alliance](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Trump’s envoy pick Hagerty terms U.S.-Japan ties “pillar”](#) (Jiji Press)

INTERNATIONAL

Tillerson meets with South Korean emissary

Nikkei took up a meeting in Washington on Thursday between Secretary of State Tillerson and visiting South Korean envoy Hong Seok-hyun, at which the top U.S. diplomat said the U.S. will seek neither regime change nor a regime collapse, and will not take military action against North Korea. The secretary stressed that there is no reason for the Trump administration to be hostile toward Pyongyang if it makes clear its intention toward denuclearization.

GOJ preparing for possibility of President Trump's impeachment

TV-Asahi's Hodo Station ran a lengthy report on the political drama unfolding in Washington, including the appointment of a former FBI director as special counsel to look into the Trump campaign's possible collusion with Russia. Former Kyodo News Managing Editor Goto claimed that some Abe administration officials are concerned that President Trump may eventually be impeached and are now collecting information on who would become vice president based on the assumption that Vice President Pence would assume the presidency. These Japanese officials are reportedly concerned that the prolonged political confusion in the U.S. will have adverse effects on the Japanese economy because a weak Trump administration hurts the U.S. economy by driving down stock prices and making proposed tax reforms and infrastructure investment initiatives almost impossible. Tokyo is also afraid that the momentum for enhancing security cooperation with Washington could be lost in the event of the possible resignation of President Trump since Prime Minister Abe has been successful in forging close personal bonds with the embattled U.S. leader.

- [Apparent China drone near Senkakus is sovereignty violation: Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan protests to China over drone flying near disputed islands](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Russia planning islanders' grave visits on disputed islands by air on June 18](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Pacific Command chief visits Yonaguni radar outpost, reasserts freedom of navigation in South China Sea](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Editorial: PACOM chief's visit demonstrates strong Japan-U.S. alliance](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: President Trump must manage his administration properly](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Improve Japan-China relations while keeping eye on U.S.-China relations](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't to reply over comfort women deal/Report will be submitted to U.N. panel](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan's suicide rate ranks sixth, highest among advanced nations](#) (Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: President Trump](#) (Mainichi)

ECONOMY

Ishihara leaves for Hanoi to attend "TPP 11" meeting

TBS and TV Asahi reported at noon that Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Ishihara left for Hanoi this morning to attend a ministerial meeting of the 11 TPP members. Ishihara was quoted as telling reporters at Haneda Airport prior to his departure: "We will clearly map out a plan for the future that aims to realize the TPP at an early date." TBS said Ishihara is expected to hold separate meetings with his counterparts in Hanoi and explain the GOJ policy to seek the effectuation of the TPP without the U.S. and obtain their understanding to reach an agreement at the ministerial meeting.

- [Signatories show mixed reactions to the TPP sans U.S.](#) (Mainichi)
- [METI's farsighted scheme to rehabilitate the power industry](#) (Nikkei)
- [Tokyo stocks tumble on Trump worries](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan's GDP growth masks stubborn deflation woes](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Why is bluefin tuna in danger of extinction?](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)

SECURITY

[PLA fighters harass U.S. military aircraft over East China Sea](#)

NHK reported on a USAF announcement that a WC-135 Constant Phoenix was harassed by two Chinese fighter jets over the East China Sea on Wednesday while conducting normal operations. The U.S. military has reportedly conveyed concern to the Chinese side by saying that the PLA conduct was "unprofessional." Noting that the U.S. plane's primary mission is to collect samples from the atmosphere for the purpose of detecting and identifying nuclear explosions, the network suspected that it may have been flying over the East China Sea in preparation for a DPRK nuclear test.

[USS Ronald Reagan to be deployed off Korean Peninsula along with Carl Vinson](#)

Nikkei reported online on a CNN report saying that the USS Ronald Reagan is heading to the Korean Peninsula to conduct joint training with the USS Carl Vinson, projecting that North Korea will react strongly.

- [Female U.S. Navy service member arrested for possession of bullet](#) (Ryukyu Shimpō)
- [Editorial: Latest cyberattack is a wake-up call](#) (Mainichi)

POLITICS

Lower House committee clears “anti-conspiracy” legislation

NHK reported that the Lower House Judiciary Committee approved the GOJ-sponsored anti-conspiracy bill at around noon today, noting that the vote took place amid protests by members of the Democratic Party and the Japanese Communist Party who insisted that more time should be spent deliberating the legislation. The LDP, Komeito, and Nippon Ishin (Japan Innovation Party) voted in favor of the bill, which will be put to a floor vote at a plenary session next Tuesday.

- [Prime minister’s schedule on May 18](#) (Nikkei)
- [Interview with LDP’s Ishiba on Abe’s constitutional revision proposals](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Gov’t should clarify truth about Kake’s new veterinary school](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Probe needed on docs stating ‘prime minister’s will’ in school project](#) (The Mainichi)
- [DP’s Hosono to step down as intraparty group leader](#) (Mainichi)
- [CIRO’s Kitamura plays major role as Abe’s “ace in the hole”](#) (THEMIS)
- [Koike political style traces back to Nihon Shinto](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Cartoon: Justice Minister Kaneda](#) (Asahi)

SCIENCE

- [Japan to ratify Nagoya protocol on genetic resources use](#) (Kyodo News)

EDUCATION

- [Persistent opposition in LDP to free higher education](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

The elderly and issues of sex

NHK’s “Close-up Gendai +” reported on the issue of sex among elderly people, which is considered taboo in Japan. The program said that people are “younger” than they used to be in terms of health. The Japan Geriatrics Society announced in January that “elderly” should be defined as those aged 75 years or older instead of the current 65 years old or older. One survey found that 76% of men in their 60s and 75% of men in their 70s have sexual desires. Many elderly couples are reportedly facing sex-related problems because men and women have different levels of sexual desire, and

there are increasing reports of sexual harassment by the elderly at nursing homes. An expert stressed the importance of close communication between couples about sex and that sex among the elderly should no longer be considered taboo.

OPINION POLLS

- [Cabinet support rate falls below 50%, Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
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